

REMARKS

I. INTRODUCTION

Claims 1, 6, 9, and 12 have been amended. Claims 2, 4, and 5 have been cancelled. The drawings have been amended. The specification has been amended. No new matter has been added. Support for the claim amendments can be found at least at ¶¶ [0012]-[0013] of the specification. Thus, claims 1, 3, and 6-15 are now pending in the present application. In light of the above amendments and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all presently pending claims are in condition for allowance.

II. DRAWINGS OBJECTION SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN

The Examiner objects to the drawings for not showing every feature of the invention specified in the claims. In light of the amendments to the drawings, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of this objection.

III. THE 35 U.S.C. § 112 REJECTION SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN

Claim 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, for being indefinite. In view of the amendments to the specification, the withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

IV. THE 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) REJECTIONS SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN

Claims 1, 8, and 13-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being obvious with respect to Aregger (U.S. Patent No. 6,276,480) in view of Matsumoto et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,778,024). Claims 2-3, 10, and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being obvious with respect to Aregger in view of Matsumoto and further in view of Itoh (U.S. Published App. No. 2004/0238259). Claims 4, 9, and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being obvious with respect to Aregger in view of Matsumoto and

further in view of Vuagnat (U.S. Patent No. 4,881,755). Claims 5-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being obvious with respect to Aregger in view of Matsumoto, further in view of Vuagnat, and further in view of Leitner et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,491,122).

Claim 1 has been amended to recite “[a] vehicle for a handicapped person, comprising: at least one steerable front wheel; a frame; at least two wheel suspensions; at least two rear wheels, each of the at least two rear wheels being individually coupled to the frame with a corresponding one of the at least wheel suspensions; *controllable steering drives, each controllable steering drive corresponding to and driving the corresponding one of the two rear wheels*; a fork holding the at least one front wheel; a steering rod connected to the fork and steering the at least one front wheel; and at least one rotational angle sensor situated on the steering rod, wherein *the rotational angle sensor provides a signal on the pivot angle of the front wheel, and wherein the signal is used for the activation of the controllable steering drives which control the two rear wheels.*”

The Examiner correctly acknowledges that the combination of Aregger, Matsumoto, and Vuagnat does not teach “the use of a rotational angle sensor situated on the steering rod.” (See 10/17/08 Office Action, p. 8). In order to cure this deficiency, the Examiner refers to Leitner. However, Leitner teaches a scooter which comprises a controller 40 that controls the motor directly and/or by controlling the power supply. (See Leitner, col. 3, ll. 14-15). The scooter also comprises a sensor 44 that monitors the angle of front wheel 16. (See Id., col. 3, ll. 44-45). Leitner teaches that speeds in excess of 5 mph while turning sharply are not permitted. Sharp turns are turns in which tiller 18 turns more than a predefined angle, i.e. 2°, 5°, or 10°. The sensor 44 outputs a signal when tiller 18, and correspondingly front wheel 16, turns more than a predetermined angle in order to prevent speeds above 5 mph while turning sharply. (See Id., ll. 41-54). Although Leitner does disclose the possibility of sensor 44 indicating more precisely the angle of turn, the “output from the turn sensor may then be fed to the controller 40, which may impose on the motor 14 a maximum speed that decreases progressively as the turn angle

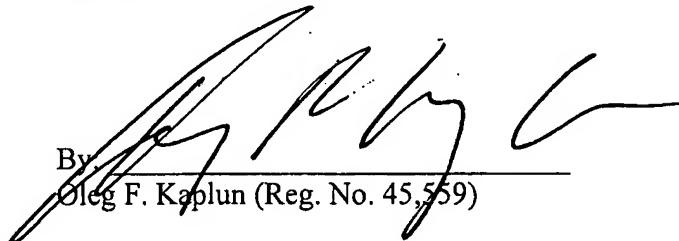
increases." (See Id., col. 7, ll. 27-32). That is, Leitner teaches that the output from the sensor is used to define a maximum speed of the motor that corresponds to a certain angle. There is no disclosure by Leitner that the output of sensor 44 "*is used for the activation of the controllable steering drives which control the two rear wheels,*" as recited in claim 1.

Applicants, therefore, respectfully submit that Aregger, Matsumoto, Itoh, Vuagnat, and Leitner, taken alone or in any combination, fail to disclose or suggest "*the rotational angle sensor provides a signal on the pivot angle of the front wheel, and wherein the signal is used for the activation of the controllable steering drives which control the two rear wheels,*" as recited in claim 1 and that claim 1 is allowable. Because claims 3 and 6-15 depend on and, therefore, contain all of the limitations of claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are also allowable.

CONCLUSION

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appln. No. 10/588,045

Amdt. Dated: April 9, 2009

Reply to Office Action of October 17, 2008

Annotated Sheet #1 Showing Changes

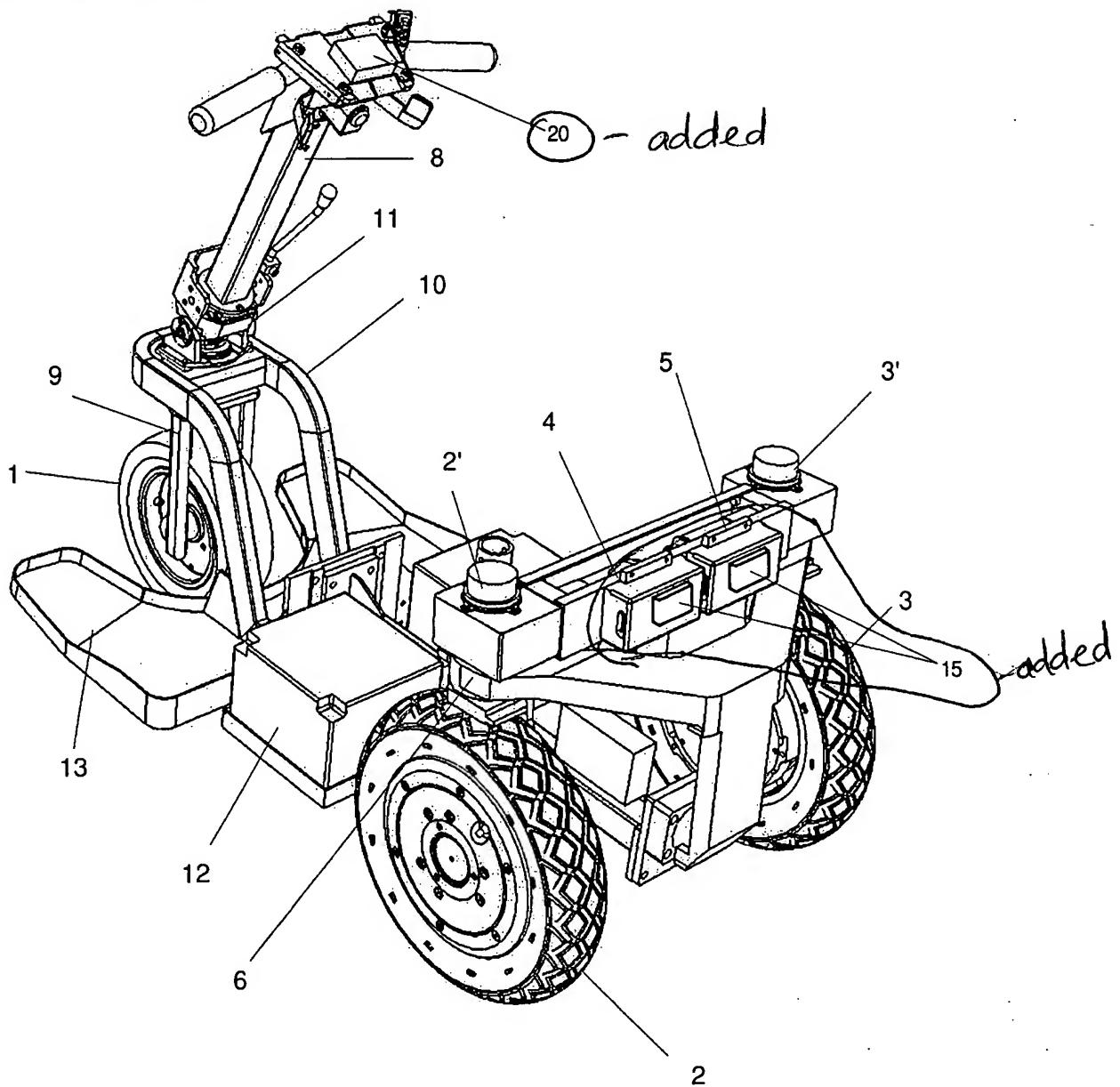


Fig. 1

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Annotated Sheet # 2 Showing Changes

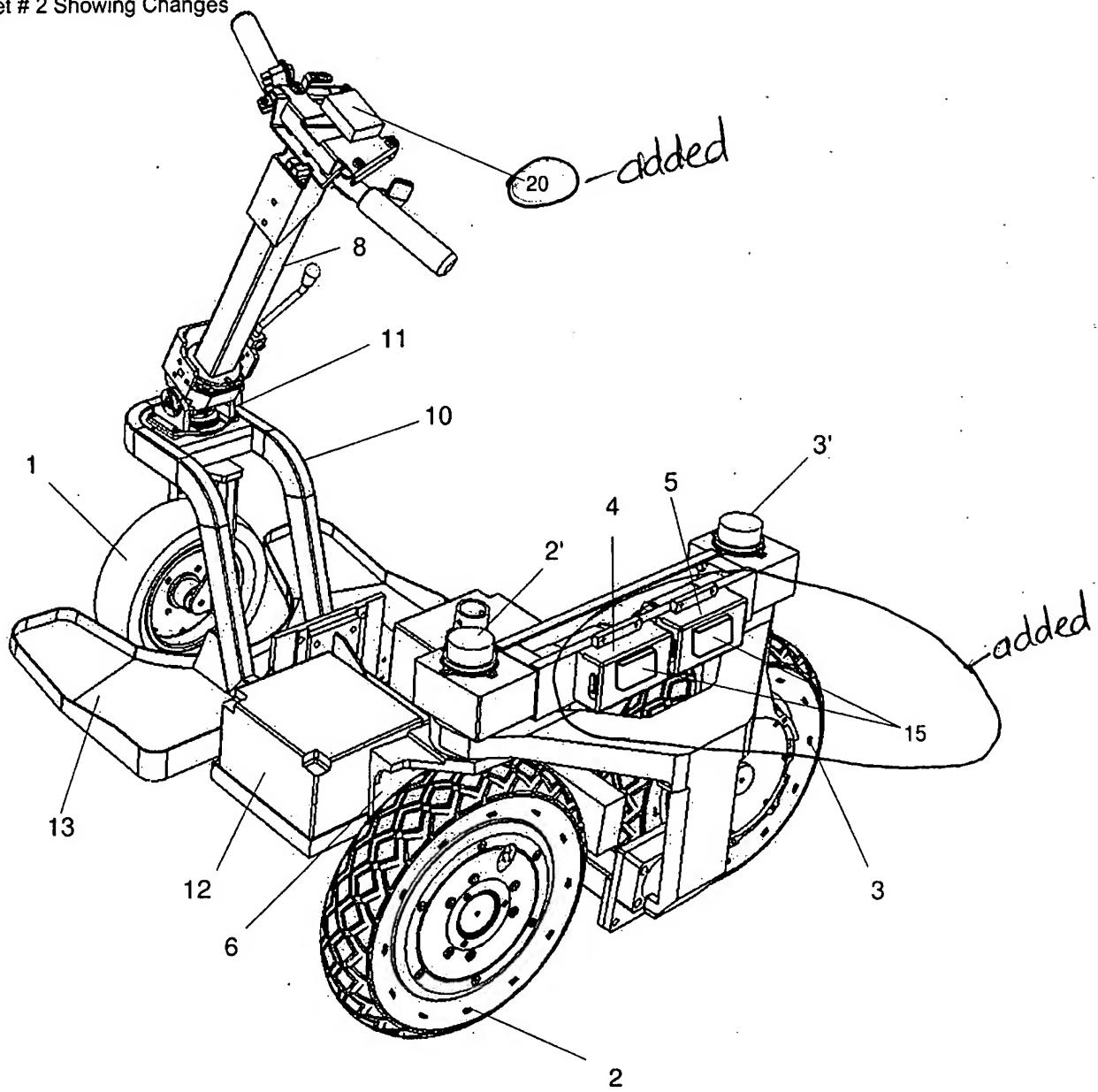


Fig. 2

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Annotated Sheet # 3 Showing Changes

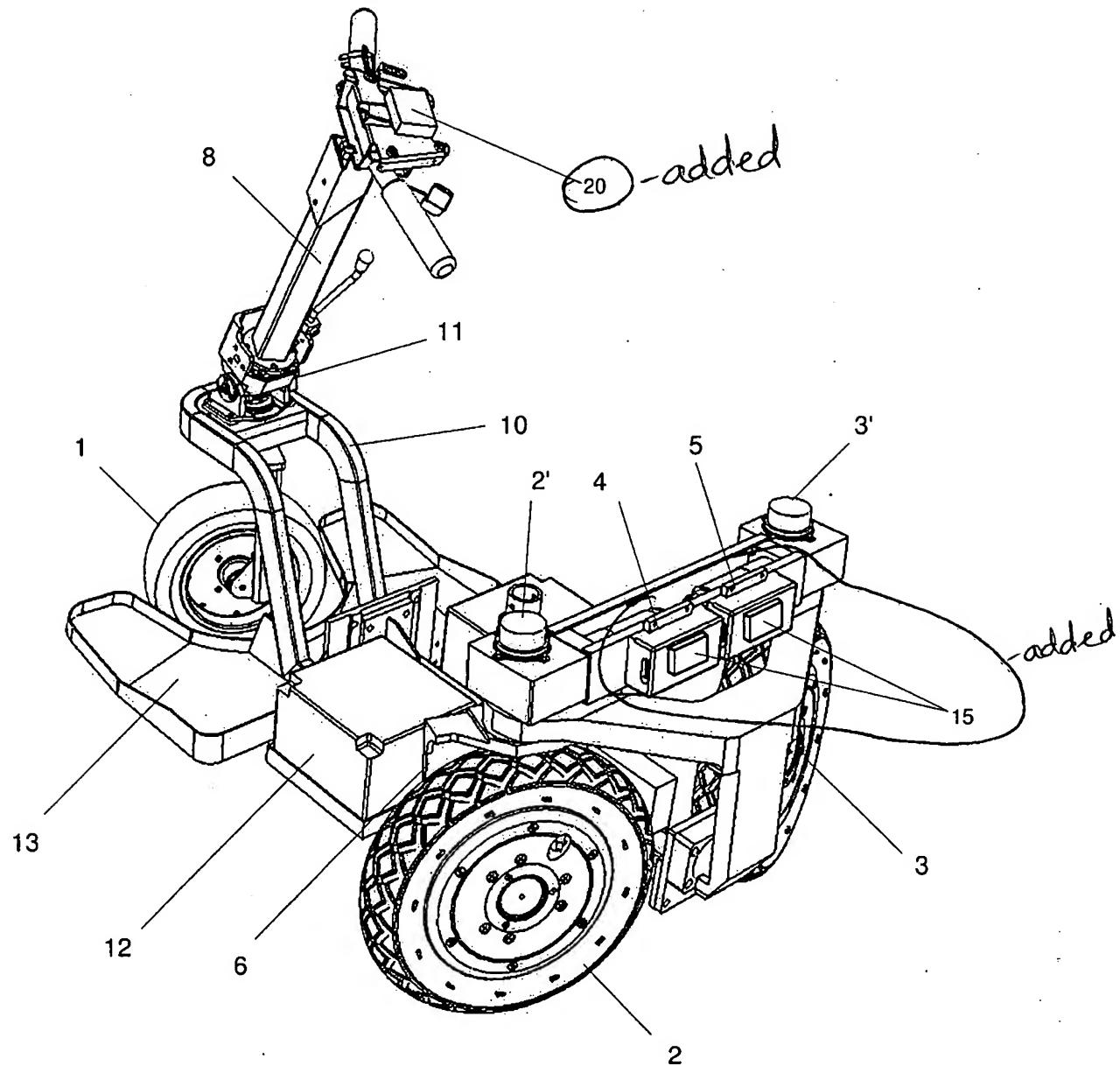


Fig. 3

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Annotated Sheet # 4 Showing Changes

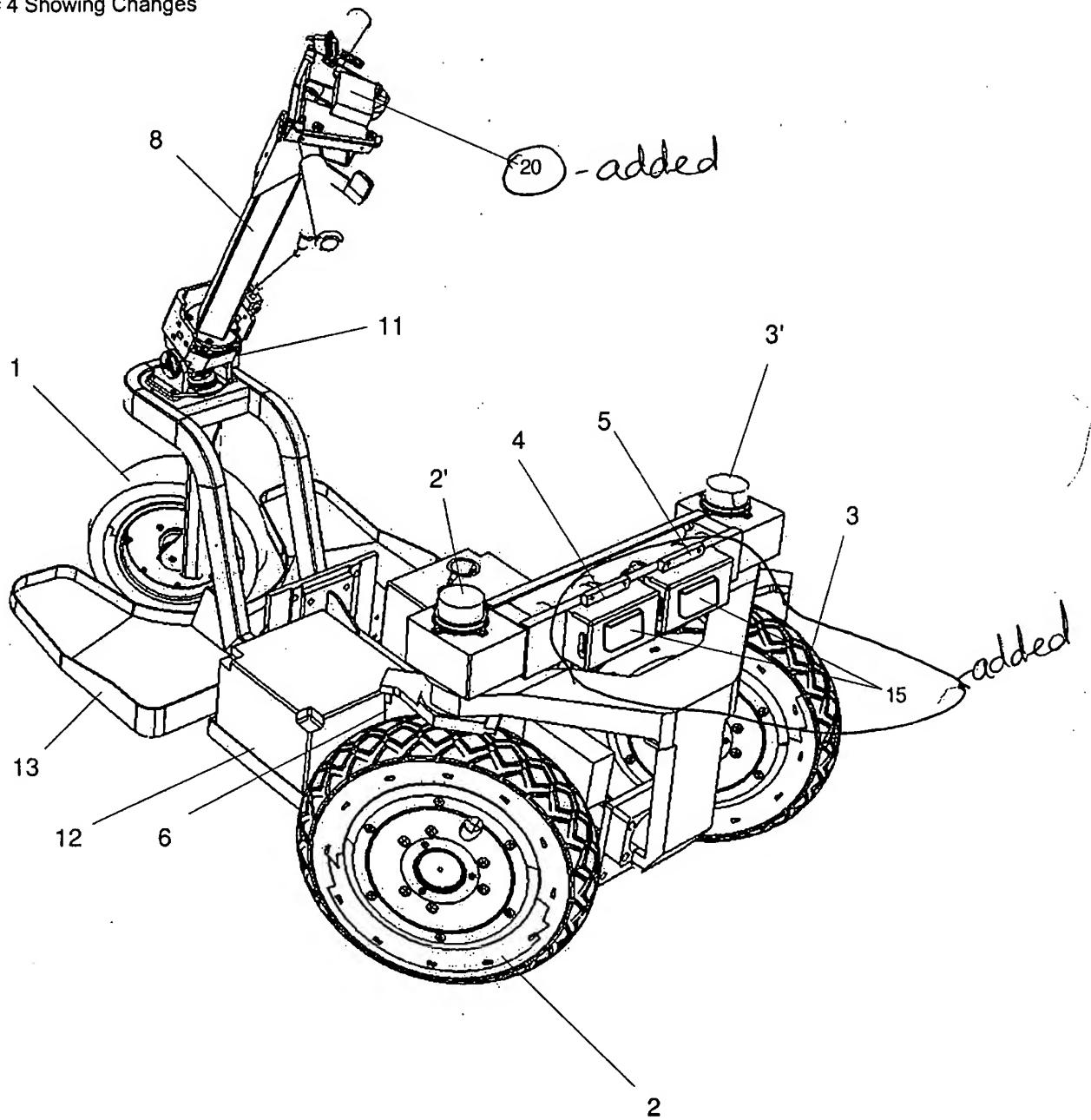


Fig. 4